

For many Americans, Thanksgiving is one of the most celebrated holidays. Not because of the traditional turkey, stuffing, and pumpkin pie; but rather because it is a time for us to give thanks with the ones we love. The past year has shown us that some of the best gifts in life do not come with bright red bows or shiny boxes, but are in the eyes of our children, wives and husbands, aunts and uncles, and other family members. This is truly one of America's great holiday traditions...the giving of thanks for friends and family.

I hope you will also take a moment and give thanks for those who cannot be with their loved ones this Thanksgiving. There are many who hold the vanguard of American Freedom at home and abroad where duty to country has called them to serve on this day. So, for those standing watch, for those responding to threats, and for those protecting our freedom and liberty granted upon us by God...thank you.

My wife Catherine and I wish you and yours a very blessed Thanksgiving.

I remain respectfully,

John Campbell

## The First Thanksgiving

In 1621, the Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Indians shared an autumn harvest feast which is acknowledged today as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the colonies. This harvest meal has become a symbol of cooperation and interaction between English colonists and Native Americans. Although this feast is considered by many to be the very first Thanksgiving celebration, it was actually in keeping with a long tradition of celebrating the harvest and giving thanks for a successful bounty of crops. Native American groups throughout the Americas, including the Pueblo, Cherokee, Creek and many others organized harvest festivals, ceremonial dances, and other celebrations of thanks for centuries before the arrival of Europeans in North America.

Historians have also recorded other ceremonies of thanks among European settlers in North America, including British colonists in Berkeley Plantation, Virginia. At this site near the Charles River in December of 1619, a group of British settlers led by Captain John Woodlief knelt in prayer and pledged "Thanksgiving" to God for their healthy arrival after a long voyage across the Atlantic. This event has been acknowledged by some scholars and writers as the official first Thanksgiving among European settlers on record. Whether at Plymouth, Berkeley Plantation, or throughout the Americas, celebrations of thanks have held great meaning and importance over time. The legacy of thanks, and particularly of the feast, have survived the centuries as people throughout the United States gather family, friends, and enormous amounts of food for their yearly Thanksgiving meal. *Information courtesy of the History Channel*

## Thanksgiving Links

[Thanksgiving Calendar](#) - Click here to see the day on when Thanksgiving falls in the coming years

[Macy's 2009 Thanksgiving Day Parade](#) - Click here to find all the information this year's Macy's Day Thanksgiving parade

[The Thanksgiving Proclamation](#) - Click here to read the original Thanksgiving proclamation from 1782

[Mayflower Myths](#) - Click here to find out the truth about common Mayflower myths!

[Take the Thanksgiving Quiz](#) - Test you and your family's knowledge on Thanksgiving

[Out of this world Thanksgiving](#) - Explore Thanksgiving in space, with the help of NASA

[Air Travel status](#) - Traveling this holiday? Check with the FAA on any flight delays

**Support Our Soldiers**      [USO](#) - United Service Organizations



[Send a Message to the Troops](#) - Department of Defense    [Volunteer to Help Veterans](#) - Department of Veterans Affairs

**Thanksgiving Facts 709 million pounds** -The forecast for U.S. cranberry production in 2009.  
**1.8 billion pounds** -The total weight of sweet potatoes produced by major sweet potato producing states in 2008.

**13.8 pounds**

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The quantity of turkey consumed by the typical American in 2007, with a hearty helping devoured at Thanksgiving time.

**\$1.33**

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Retail cost per pound of a frozen whole turkey in December 2008.

**117 million**

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Number of households across the nation — all potential gathering places for people to celebrate the holiday.